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APRIL 2003

C L A S S I C

F A S T

F E R R I E S

GERMAN WATERPOLICE PT.3s

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HYDROFOILS: EXIT OR EXHIBIT?

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THE ONLY PERIODICAL ABOUT THE HEYDAY OF PASSENGER HYDROFOILS, HOVERCRAFT & CATAMARANS – AS WELL AS RELEVANT NEWS ■ ISSUED IN PDF FORMAT. PLEASE CHECK OUR SITE ON THE WEB FOR NEXT ISSUE DETAILS:

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COVER PHOTO : ONE OF THE PAIR OF FORMER BRITISH RHS 70 HYDROFOILS, *FLYER 2*, REENTERED SERVICE IN THAILAND LAST MONTH. TURN TO PAGE 4 FOR MORE [FREDDY STORHEIL PHOTO]



[SUPRAMAR AG photo]

Long live the hydrofoil

Next month marks the 50th anniversary of the first scheduled commercial hydrofoil operation in the world.

In May 1953 a 30-seat Supramar PT.10, *Freccia d'Oro*, entered service on Lake Maggiore on a 33-nautical mile international route between Locarno, Switzerland and Stresa, Italy. The hydrofoil, of the surface-piercing type, had been designed by German engineer Hanns von Schertel who had experimented with a number of hydrofoils since 1927, including during World War II.

In 1952 von Schertel and other members of the Schertel–Sachsenberg company of Germany had formed Supramar AG in Lucerne, Switzerland and the PT.10 was the first commercial hydrofoil to come out of this new collaboration. As we all know, with time many more Supramar hydrofoils of different shapes and sizes would be built and put into service worldwide.

In more recent years very few new hydrofoils of any design from any producer have entered service anywhere – one exception being Connexxion Fast Flying Ferries in the Netherlands which recently introduced three new Voskhod-2Ms as reported on in past issues of CFF – and the number of operational hydrofoils, of course, has been dwindling.

It is therefore notable that in this issue, almost to the day fifty years since that first hydrofoil on Lake Maggiore, we can report on two new pro-hydrofoil developments: Ustica Lines is taking delivery of a new Rodriguez Foilmaster, its fourth, and only well over a year since its last, in May, and the first of two former British Rodriguez RHS 70s has been refurbished and re-entered service last month with Phuket Flying Boats in Thailand.

Who said the last chapter on the surface-piercing hydrofoil had been written?

Ustica Lines orders fourth Foilmaster

newz

Rodriquez Cantieri Navali has confirmed that a fourth Foilmaster hydrofoil for Ustica Lines is nearing completion in Messina. The previously unannounced order was placed with the yard last year. Due for delivery at the end of May the new hydrofoil will be named *Ettore M*.

Ustica Lines, based in Trapani in north-western Sicily, is becoming one of the big players in the fast ferry operators field in Italy. Formed in 1993, the first services were introduced the following year to Napoli and Tunisia using a leased Rodriquez RHS 160F hydrofoil. Up to 2002 the company acquired ten fast ferries, three of which being newbuildings and the rest from other operators. All but two of these were Rodriquez hydrofoils of the RHS 140, RHS 160, RHS 160F and Foilmaster designs. The two which were not were a pair of Kvaerner Fjellstrand Singapore single-deck FlyingCat 40m catamarans acquired from a Philippine operator in 2001.

Also in 2001 Ustica extended its operational area beyond Sicily and Napoli/Tunisia by introducing one of the RHS 160s, *Calarossa*, on routes in the northern Adriatic between Trieste and Pola in Croatia.

Last year one of the catamarans, *Gianluca M*, was transferred to Spain and, renamed *Garajonay*, entered



Foilmaster *Eduardo M* entered service with Ustica Lines in 1996 [MATS FINNISON photo]

service in the Canary Islands between Tenerife and Gomera with associate company Garajonay Exprés. The other FlyingCat 40m, *Vittoria M*, was introduced on another new route network in the northern Adriatic between Venice and various points in Croatia. This has since also been repositioned to the Canary Islands.

Yet another new service was introduced at the end of July between Porto Empédocle, just outside Agrigento, in south-western Sicily and the islands of Linosa and Lampedusa using the company's newest Foilmaster *Natalie M* delivered in February 2002. Prior to this the company's sole RHS 140,

Spargi, had been working a Linosa–Lampedusa inter-island service.

The new route immediately attracted good passenger loads and earlier this year Ustica Lines announced it had ordered a fourth Foilmaster, *Ettore M*, from the Rodriquez yard for delivery in May.

The first and second Ustica Foilmasters, *Eduardo M* and *Adriana M*, entered service with the operator in 1996 and 1999.

Also announced in February was the acquisition of two more catamarans, *Gabriele M* and *Orone*, with an order for a third having been placed with an Australian yard. This is due for delivery next month also.

KF FlyingCat 40m catamarans *Vittoria M* and *Garajonay* have been repositioned to the Canary Islands [GARAJONAY EXPRES photo]





[FREDDY STORHEIL photo]

RHS 70 re-enters service in Thailand

One of the two Rodriguez RHS 70 hydrofoils that were taken from Southampton, England to Phuket, Thailand under their own power during September–December last year as reported on in previous issues of this magazine, has now entered service with Phuket Flying Boats/Kon-Tiki Co in south Thailand.

The former Red Funnel vessel, *Shearwater 6*, delivered in 1982, has been refurbished at the Wavemaster Langkawi yacht center and

yard, Malaysia. Some of the work on the vessel was performed by the owners themselves and some by Wavemaster staff, including the new attractive paint job of white and blue.

The number of seats has been reduced from the original 67 to 50. Stored under each seat is a life jacket and in addition four life boys and a lifeboat for 65 persons are carried. The vessel's air-conditioning capacity has been increased to three units, two

in the bow saloon and one aft, reflecting the rather different climatic conditions under which the hydrofoil will now be operating in Thailand as opposed to the British Isles.

Renamed *Flyer 2* and following test runs in order to acquaint the new Thai crew with the vessel, the first revenue service was operated on March 12th. Currently one daily round trip to the Similan Islands is being operated by *Flyer 2*; on Sunday–

Shearwater 6 being lifted out of the water for overhaul and a new identity at the Wavemaster Langkawi yard [MIKAEL ERIKSSON photo, both]





The new paint job in progress. This was carried out by Wavemaster [JONAS STIERNSTRÖM photo]

Tuesday from Kaoh Lak north of Phuket and on Wednesday–Saturday from Patong. The hydrofoil leaves outbound at 09:00 and is back in Kaoh Lak or Patong at around 17:00.

The new service has been very well received by passengers and local travel agencies during its first two weeks in existence, reports Mikael Eriksson of Phuket Flying Boats. A 20% holding of the company is obtainable for interested parties.

The other RHS 70, *Shearwater 5*, has been renamed *Flyer 1* and is expected to enter service in September – the peak season for diving in the area is from November to May – after having received the same treatment as *Flyer 2* at the Wavemaster yard in Langkawi.



Flyer 2 ready to re-enter service with Phuket Flying Boats last month [JONAS STIERNSTRÖM photo]

Some interesting info on what is most likely the first ever scale model Supramar PT.50 hydrofoil surfaced only recently.



before

PT.50 COMING OUT OF THE WOODWORK

scalebox

ALL PHOTOS BY
VINCENZO ANNUARIO



apart from the obvious, it being a lovely model, what's intriguing about it is that it was built more than forty years ago – and it's powered too! It is believed to have been built in 1958, which indeed was the year prior to the first full-size PT.50 being delivered by

Rodriquez, in 1959.

Originally the model was powered by a pair of small 25 mm in length diesel motors. Constructed from wood to a scale of 1:20, it has a length overall of 1.4m and width across the bow foil of 0.5m; the inclination of which is adjustable. Both the forward and aft foils

are made of brass.

The model was discovered in 2000 by Vincenzo Annuario, who is a devoted ship modeler based, like the Rodriquez yard, in Messina, Sicily. After several years in a box in the attic of a friend's house it did not look too well but had potential, and Vincenzo decided to restore it. He worked for six months on getting it

back in shape, including replacing the original propulsion installation with two 12V electric motors turning it into a two-channel radio controlled model, etc.

Top-tuned and looking better than ever it emerged as *Freccia d'Oro*, sporting a simple but attractive paint scheme of white with a blue trim line so typical of the early days. The model did not have a name when acquired by Vincenzo, but being from 1958 this name is by no means utterly unfounded.

OPPOSITE: The model was built in the late 50s and looked like this when discovered by Vincenzo in 2000, after it had spent many years tucked away in a box in the attic of a friend's place

BELOW: The three views below show the PT.50 as it looks today, following six months of skillful and affectionate restoration. The radio controlled model has been named *Freccia d'Oro* after its full-size counterpart, delivered by Cantiere Navale Leopoldo Rodriguez in 1959



after



A total of three PT.50s were delivered by Cantiere Navale Leopoldo Rodriguez in 1959, two of which went to an overseas operator (but would later return to Italy) with the third, *Freccia d'Oro*, entering service in the Bay of Naples. The vessel operated here and in Sicily and the Eolie Islands with Aliscafi-SNAV for its entire life, except for a short spell in 1986 when, twenty-seven years into its career, it was leased by another Italian operator, Adriatica di Navigazione. Keeping its name it was employed on this operator's route network out of Termoli to the island of Tremiti and other points along the Adriatic coast.

But then bad luck struck. While in the Rodriguez shipyard for the winter, in November 1991 heavy storms passed through Messina severely damaging *Freccia d'Oro* as well as a number of other hydrofoils. The degree of damage inflicted on the vessel combined with its advanced age – at 32 it was at the time the oldest PT.50 in the SNAV fleet – was such that it was decided not to repair it but declare it a constructive total loss.

Thanks to Vincenzo, and of course in part the friend who had kept it for more than twenty-five years, the model did not suffer the same fate and a bit of Italian hydrofoil history has been preserved. ■



Take your pick

Another passionate modeler in Messina is Antonio Donato. Like Vincenzo, he builds various ship models and no true Italian such collection would of course be complete without at least one *aliscafo*.

Tiziano was the first Foilmaster hydrofoil built by Rodriguez and entered service with Siremar in 1994. The convincing-looking



model, which is non-operational, was built to a scale of 1:100. It's constructed from toothpicks, as are indeed all models by Antonio, with the exception of the foils, and took two months to complete. Other fast ferries built by Antonio so far include three Rodriguez monohulls; two car/passenger *Aquastradas*, *Guizzo* and *Isola di Procida*, and a passenger-only TMV 50, *Tindari Jet*. Future plans include the sole Rodriguez Seagull 400 catamaran built, *Achernar*, delivered in 1993. ■

MODEL & PHOTOS BY ANTONIO DONATO



by christof
schramm

GERMAN WATERPOLICE PT.3s

ALL PHOTOS IN ARTICLE HESSISCHES BEREITSCHAFTSPOLIZEIPRÄSIDIUM,
WASSERSCHUTZSTAFFEL

In the 1950s the Wasserschutzpolizei of Hessen, Germany, the Hessian waterway police, which is responsible for the control of both the commercial and pleasure traffic along long stretches of the rivers Rhine and Main, decided to purchase a new generation of patrol craft which were able to reach a higher speed than the vessels then in use.

A major problem was the wash generated by conventional fast craft on the rivers and the channels, damaging shore installations and in some cases causing trouble for other, small-sized boats.

The board of the Hessian waterpolice found the hydrofoil concept the ideal solution. Here was a fast patrol vessel without bad effects on the ambient environment. So the well known Swiss hydrofoil design company of Supramar A.G. developed a small 3-ton craft suitable to the needs and meeting with the requirements of the Wasserschutzpolizei.

Designated PT.3, three of these 10.7m craft, *Hessen 10*, *Hessen 6* and *Hessen 2*, were built locally under license to Supramar and delivered in 1955, 1957 and 1958.

Incidentally, at least seven more of the PT.3 type are known to have been built. Two were delivered by Rodriguez in Italy in 1957 and five by Hitachi in Japan 1962–64.

The experience with the Hessen Class hydro-

foils was good. All three boats were able to achieve a top speed of 57 km/h and an economical service speed of 45 km/h. Compared to the Waterpolice boats of today – where some patrol vessels on the Rhine will reach speeds of up to 100 km/h! – this may not sound of much. But in those days the usual patrol craft on German waterways would achieve speeds of only 30–35 km/h which was becoming too slow for chasing other vessels built in the post war period.

The hydrofoils operated successfully for many years. Reports from police officers working on and with these boats say that the crews did not have any difficulty with running down vessels that were under suspicion for this or that reason and getting alongside these in spite of the protruding foils, as, like on most surface-piercing hydrofoils, these were protected by fenders attached to the hull.



ALL PHOTOS IN ARTICLE

HESSISCHES BEREITSCHAFTSPOLIZEIPRÄSIDIUM,
WASSERSCHUTZSTAFFEL

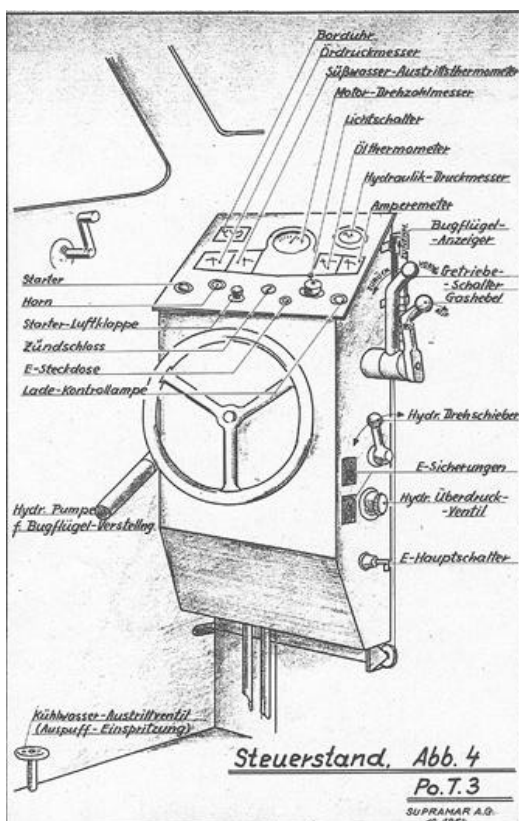


Also, the riverside environment such as banks and various structures was not impaired by the hydrofoils, which, when foilborne, generate almost no wash.

The first vessel, *Hessen 10*, was originally equipped with a single Daimler-Benz M118 petrol engine with an output of 150 hp. The use of petrol was found to be too dangerous however, and the following craft had two Ford diesels installed, each providing 120 hp. Later, in the 60s, these engines were replaced by 170hp Volvo-Penta diesels.

The three hydrofoils behaved very well, it has been reported. They ran stable and fast on their foils and were able to manoeuvre through dense traffic on more narrow parts of the rivers without problems. Also, they did not require a higher level of maintenance work than other patrol boats in the Waterpolice fleet.

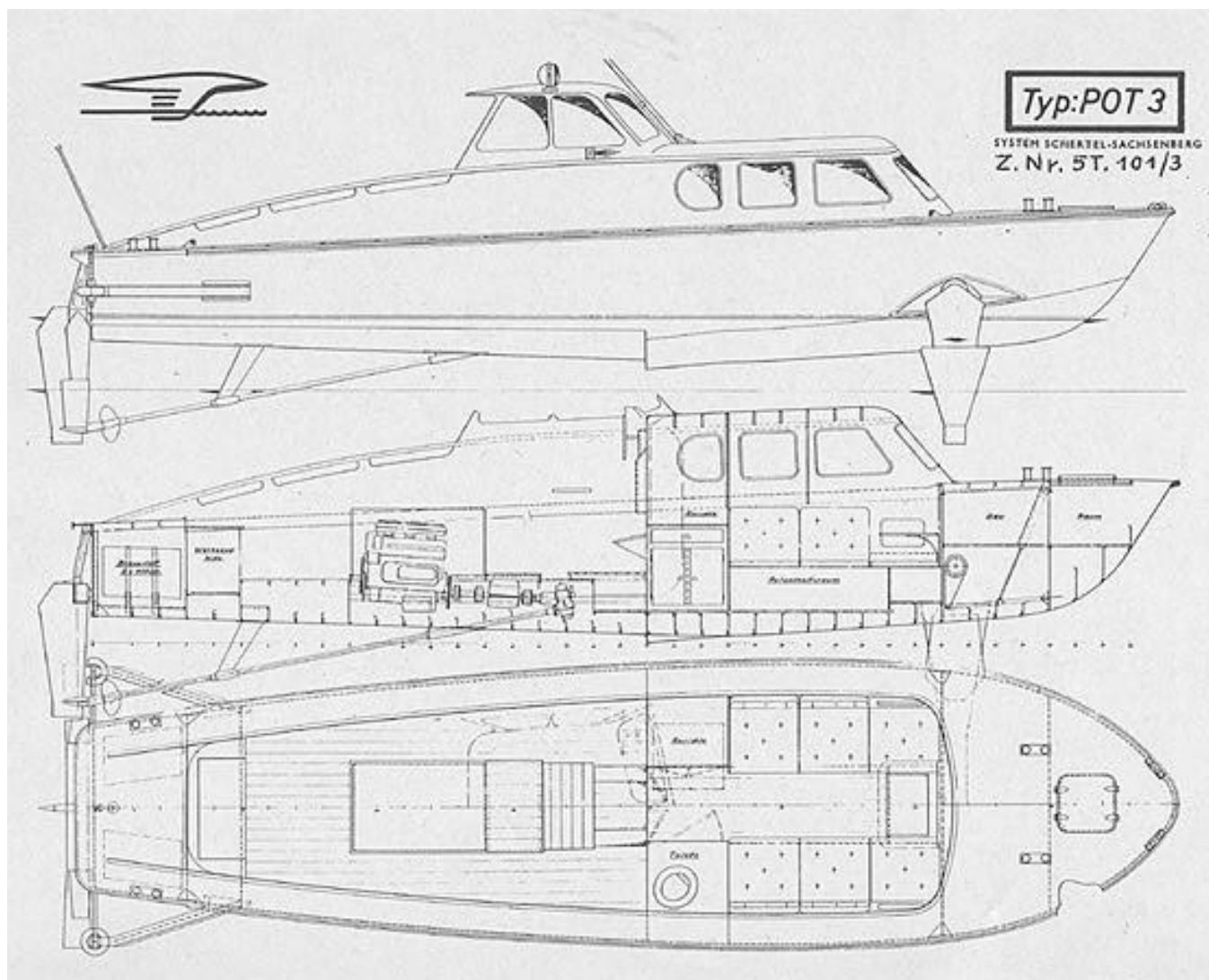
As the only major disadvantages reported on were the fact that the PT.3s generated very much noise and consumed large quantities of fuel as compared to modern craft offering the same speed. The generated noise was a result of the full metal hull, made from aluminium, acting as a sound body for the engine noise combined with poor sound proofing of the engine room.



Sketch of the wheelhouse on the Hessian Class Supramar PT.3s

The Waterpolice maintenance base with PT.3s *Hessen 2* and *Hessen 6* in the foreground. Note small differences on the superstructures





But nevertheless, the Hessen PT.3s served for many years until sold between 1977 and 1979.

Today only the fate of the *Hessen 2* is known, however. This was purchased by a shipping company in Mainz, Germany which planned to use the craft as a fast crew transfer shuttle. But this failed due to the high fuel costs and the noise of the boat, which is now stored under tarpaulins near Mainz. The whereabouts of the other two hydrofoils is unknown and the remains have disappeared.

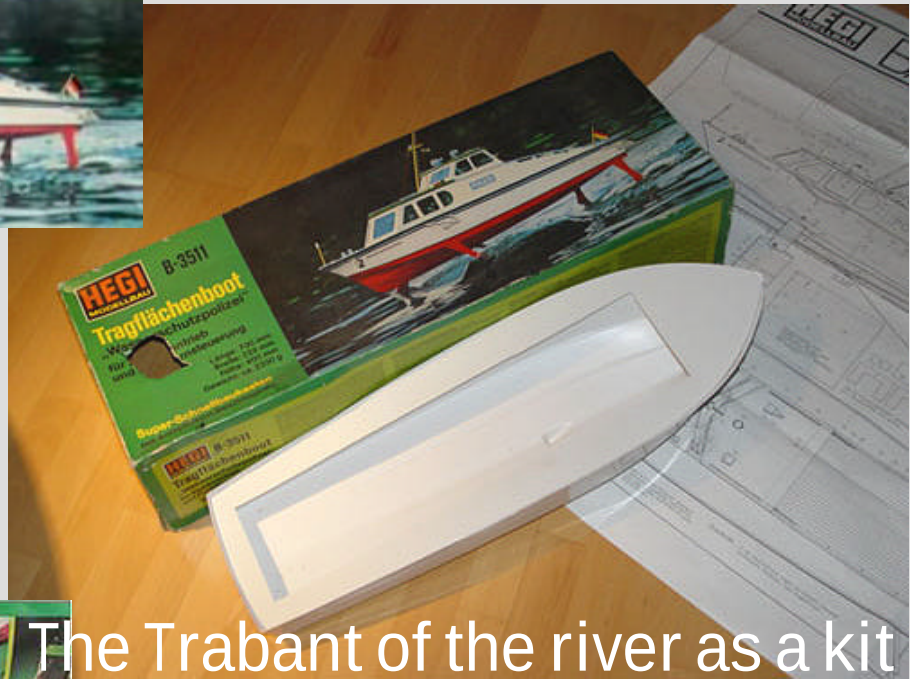
The Hessen PT.3s are the only example of using the von Schertel hydrofoil concept for governmental use. And although they served the Hessian Waterpolice successfully for nearly twenty-five years, the hydrofoil as such has gotten totally out of focus in the engineering line of business, especially in Germany. ■





The rather noisy Hessian Waterpolice PT.3s also caught the attention of German model manufacturer Hegi Modellbau, which issued a kit of this little hydrofoil in the late 70s or early 80s.

Completed, the radio-controlled model would have a total length of approximately 700 mm, height of 400 mm and width across foils of 225 mm.



CHRISTOF SCHRAMM photo, main

The Trabant of the river as a kit



The kit came complete with plans and building instructions in German and English, fittings, adhesive transfers, rudders and propulsion accessories but without motors and enamel.

Since long out of production, Christof Schramm was fortunate enough to come across the kit some time ago but has yet to complete it. Besides trying to find the time to build it, unfortunately, he reports, the polystyrol hull and

parts for the superstructure have been deformed with time. When he acquired the kit the box had been stored in a basement for nearly twenty years, exposed to the temperature changes of summer and winter. Also, some of the assembly instructions are incorrect so it will take some knowledge and improvising to finish it. ■



No doubt, a lot of readers must have asked themselves "Why isn't there a hydrofoil or fast ferry museum?". Some, including naval architect and hydrofoil enthusiast Martin Grimm in Australia, who should be familiar to readers of *CFF*, and the editor of this magazine, have in the past taken the question one step further and approached either an existing maritime museum or other relevant organization or an operator-in-the-process-of-getting-rid-of-its-hydrofoil(s) suggesting a piece of revolutionary transport history and technology be preserved. In each instance the reaction to these ideas pretty much was that *it's too old to continue service but too young to go into a museum*. A no-win situation, and not just for the person who suggested it.

Another private individual who would like to see a hydrofoil museum happen before it is too late – and we haven't far to go until we are there – and wish the industry of today would rediscover the hydrofoil so that it will also be around tomorrow is Christof Schramm in Germany (who also compiled the article on the German Waterpolice PT.3s appearing in this issue). Since some time he is investigating the hydrofoil remains within his country and has so far tracked down a few early, small test designs at the Technik-Museum Speyer and Deutsches Schiffahrtsmuseum in Bremerhaven. He also expects to discover some interesting objects in the former DDR.

If a suggestion of preserving this or that hydrofoil, or indeed establishing an entire museum, was put forward today chances are the response would be along the lines of "Hydrofoils? Who remembers them?". And if not enough people remembers, or cares, the museum or exhibition will not attract enough visitors, and nobody wants empty museums.

WHERE IN THE WORLD

Perhaps one of the answers to why there is no such museum lies here – those with an interest in these craft are too few and far between, scattered around the globe. It's not like with trains and trams

or cars or aircraft. They are all over the place and everyone has seen one, and they can be found in hundreds of museums all over the world.

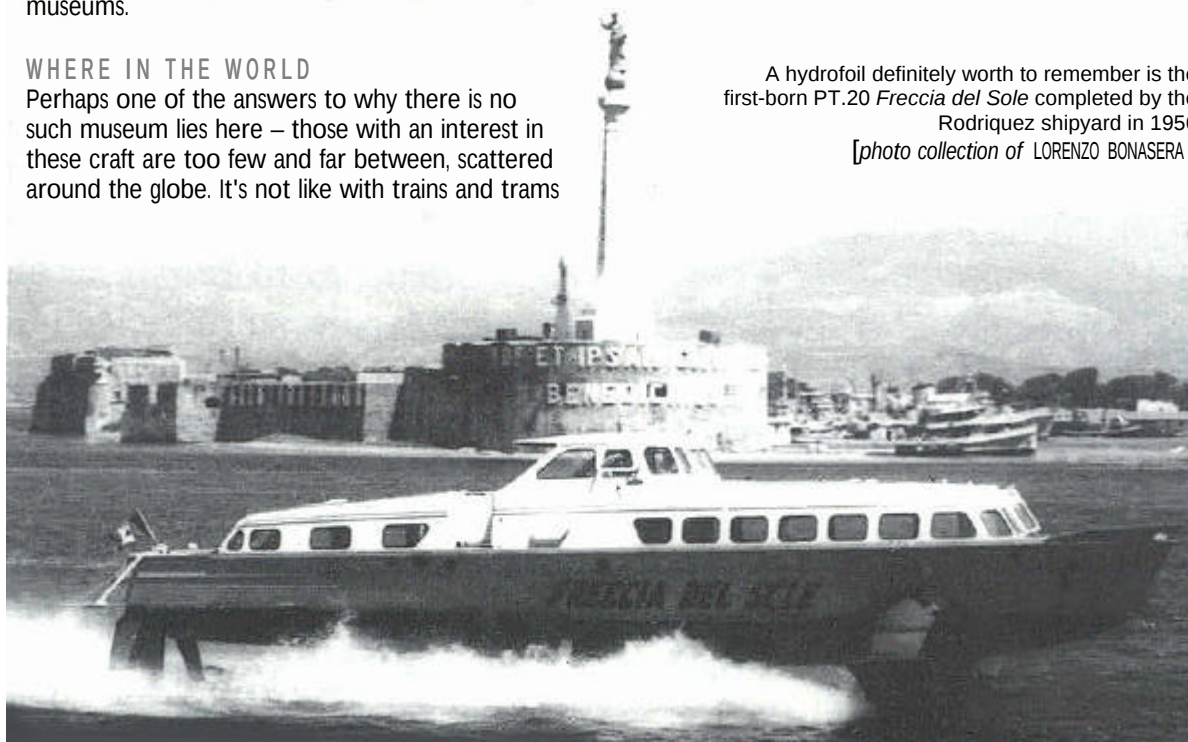
For, what would be the perfect place for a hydrofoil museum? In Switzerland, where the famous Supramar designs were developed but where there are no hydrofoils? Or in Italy, where the Rodriquez shipyard of course is responsible for having produced the largest number of hydrofoils outside the former USSR and where quite a few can still be seen live? Or in North America, where a lot of experimenting with hydrofoils used to take place but where a wider commercial breakthrough never happened, in spite of the Boeing Jetfoil. Or in Russia? Or Japan? Or Scandinavia?

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

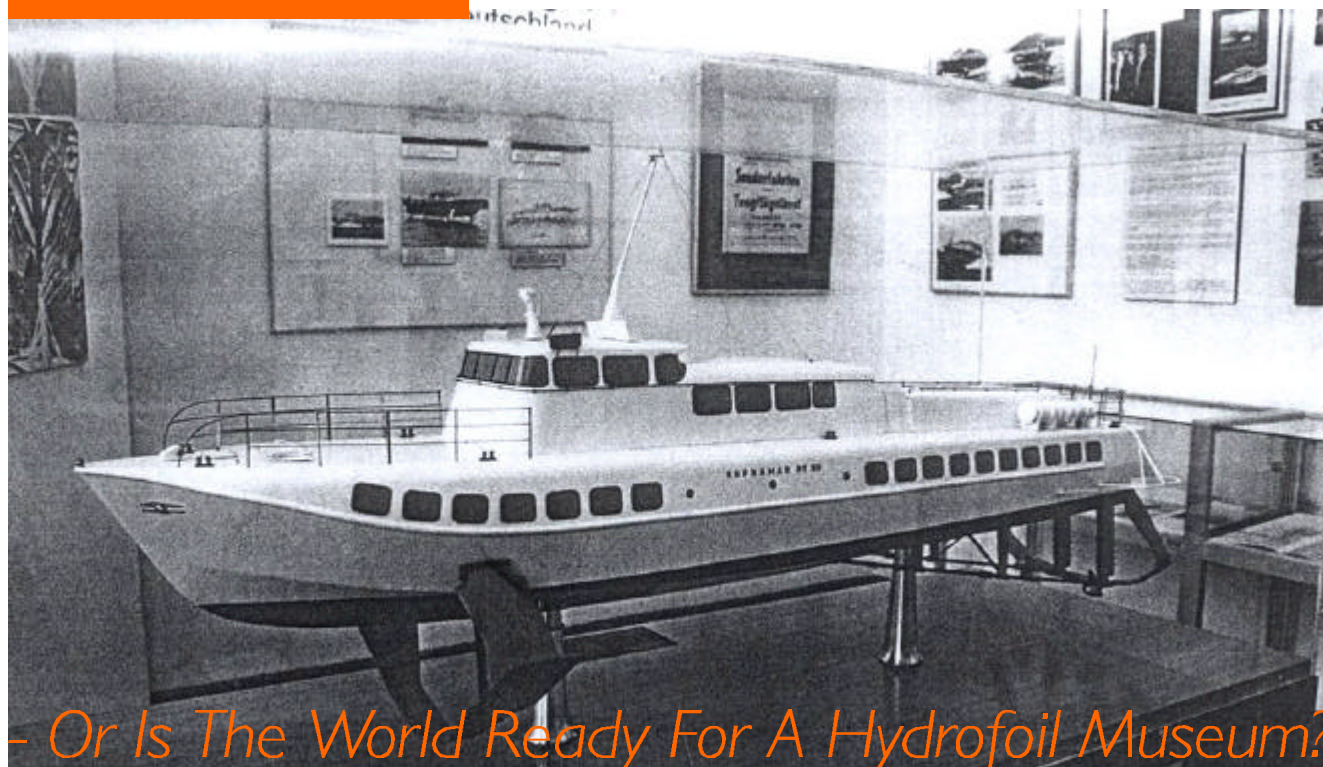
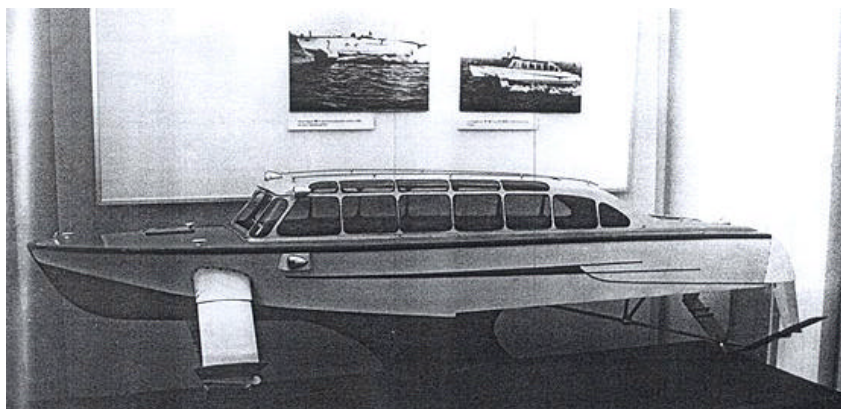
Also, a hydrofoil museum worthy its name would have to be more than a couple of pityful corroded hulls and foils sitting on dry land along with a handful of historical photographs on a wall. In order to be interesting to a wider audience, young and old, and not only the relatively small group of die-hard hydrofoil enthusiasts, the collection should include such hydrofoils that are familiar to the public one way or another. Either because they are, or used to be, part of everyday life or something you have traveled on as a tourist. In other words, passenger hydrofoils and not only in itself interesting non-commercial experimental craft and prototypes which, it is safe to assume, appeal mostly to the technical minded.

Obviously, an obstacle of significance for many a museum, if in fact not all, in this category is the financial aspect, both acquisition- and maintenance-wise. Storage is another. So some sort of backing

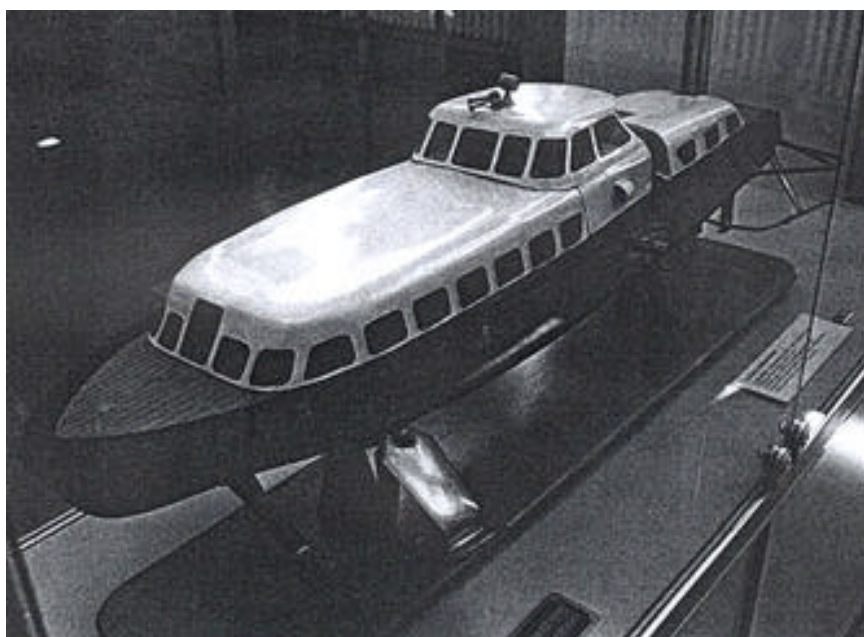
A hydrofoil definitely worth to remember is the first-born PT.20 *Freccia del Sole* completed by the Rodriquez shipyard in 1956
[photo collection of LORENZO BONASERA.]



IS THE
HYDROFOIL
READY FOR
THE MUSEUM?



- Or Is The World Ready For A Hydrofoil Museum?



TOP + CENTER + BOTTOM :
Models of Supramar hydrofoils
of the PT.10, PT.50 and
PT.20 types

SMALL PICTURE ABOVE :
Model of the Kværner Fjellstrand
FoilCat foil assisted catamaran
prototype
[VERKEHRSMUSEUM DRESDEN photo, all]

from the industry or dedicated volunteer work would be needed – and probably both.

HOVERCRAFTERS DO IT BETTER

But it can be done, and a good example on this is the Hovercraft Museum in the UK. Supported by The Hovercraft Society, which dates back to 1971 and is run by a council consisting of persons from the hovercraft industry, the Museum Trust's aim is to create an international hovercraft centre to promote and acknowledge the hovercraft, past and present. The Museum collections are so far only open to members of the Society, but the public is invited at certain occasions such as the annual Hovershow at Lee-on-the-Solent near Portsmouth and across from the Isle of Wight – indeed traditional hovercraft territory.

THE OBVIOUS CANDIDATE

Several years back the Rodriguez yard thought about putting its first ever hydrofoil, the prototype PT.20 *Freccia del Sole*, on display in a public place in Messina. This would pay a tribute not only to the

THE TRAVELING KIND

But if you can't have the real thing, or a whole museum, then perhaps at least an exhibition displaying scale models, memorabilia, photographs and other documents?

The International Hydrofoil Society in the U.S. has tried to drum up support for a traveling hydrofoil exhibition twice, last about six months ago, but so far also without much success. With so much going on in the world today and being on people's minds, the topic of hydrofoils just doesn't seem to be hot enough. Also, a problem for a non-profit organization such as the IHS for example would be the financing of the shipping and insurance of the models and other material, security, etc.

In 1997 a traveling exhibition of the kind the IHS has in mind was initiated and put together by the Elbschiffahrtsmuseum in Lauenburg, Germany. Displaying model hydrofoils, old and new photographs and other material it visited the Transport and Marine museums in Dresden and Rostock, the Verkehrsmuseum Dresden and

A future hydrofoil museum would have to include well-known passenger hydrofoils and not only various in itself interesting non-commercial test craft, like this nicely restored small early Lürssen prototype at the Technik-Museum Speyer, Germany [CHRISTOF SCHRAMM photo, both]



shipyard and the Rodriguez family, but also to the late Baron Hanns von Schertel and the team at Supramar as well as other hydrofoil pioneers before them. And of course to the hydrofoil in general and *Freccia del Sole* in particular, which successfully ploughed the seas between Messina and Reggio di Calabria on mainland Italy for an impressive 29 years between 1956 and 1985.

In the former Soviet Union the Poti shipyard displayed its first built Kometa in a square in the town center in the 80s after the hydrofoil had served for more than twenty-five years.

Schiffahrtsmuseum Rostock. The models exhibited included a Supramar PT.20, a very nice example of a PT.50 and what would have to be a variant of the smaller PT.10, the latter of which was the first commercial design from Supramar in 1953 (also see page 2), as well as the Kværner Fjellstrand FoilCat prototype.

It has not been confirmed whether this exhibition still exists and is presently in another museum or was discontinued and the items returned to their owners. ■



Norwegian Fjellstrand 38.8m sold in Croatia

Operators in countries along the eastern shoreline of the Adriatic always were frequent customers of fast ferries on the second hand market.

A recent movement was the sale early last month by Partrederiet Kystekspresen, Norway of its Fjellstrand 38.8m catamaran *Ternen* to a company based in Zadar, Croatia.

Renamed *Princ Zadra*, but still carrying also its Norwegian name and Kystekspresen design, the 274-seat vessel left Stavanger for the Adriatic under its own power at the beginning of March. It arrived in the port of

Brest in north-western France on March 16th and is still there as we go to press, awaiting better conditions in the Atlantic/Biscay.

The catamaran was originally one of two delivered to Cats Line in Spain in 1989, as *Eyra*, for operations between points on the Costa del Azahar and the Balearic Islands. In 1993 the catamaran was acquired by another company, Golden Line, and transferred south to Costa del Sol where it entered service between Benalmádena and the Moroccan port of M'Diq. It did last in this role for only the one season and was back in

Norway in June the following year having been purchased by Partrederiet Kystekspresen, a company made up of established fast ferry operators Fosen Trafikklag and Møre og Romsdal Fylkesbåtar, for its new Trondheim–Kristiansund service.

Ternen had been up for sale for about a year when sold last month in Croatia. It has been replaced on the Kystekspresen Kristiansund–Trondheim route by two new 276-seat Fjellstrand FlyingCat 40 catamarans introduced in June 2002. Cruising at 36 knots, the multi-stop journey takes 3 hours 15 minutes.

ABOVE: Fjellstrand 38.8m catamaran *Ternen* / *Princ Zadra* being prepared for its positioning trip to the Adriatic in Stavanger on March 5th . . .

[TERJE MOEN photo]

RIGHT: . . . and on arrival in Brest, France on March 16th and still carrying its Norwegian name and Kystekspresen paint scheme

[ODDGEIR REFIK photo]





Catamarans come and go in Hamburg

Speedways will not be operating the KF FlyingCat 40m catamaran *Vargøy* on the Hamburg–Helgoland route this season [TIM TIMOLEON photo]

There will be some changes on the Hamburg fast ferry waterfront this season.

One of three operators, Förde Reederei Seetouristik, FRS, is to introduce a Fjellstrand FlyingCat 52 catamaran on its seasonal Hamburg–Helgoland service in May. The new 52m 579-passenger vessel, *Halunder Jet*, will replace the company's 342-seat Kværner Fjellstrand FlyingCat 40m catamaran *Hanse Jet II*. FRS starts this year's season on April 5th and continues through to October 26th.

As a result of this, one of the other fast ferry operators, Reederei Speedways Fast Ferries, has decided to withdraw from the route and will not be running its leased 230-seat KF FlyingCat 40m *Vargøy* between Hamburg and the Frisian island of Helgoland this year. Delivered to Norwegian operator Finnmark Fylkesrederi og Ruteselskap in 1994, *Vargøy* first appeared on the German route in the summer of 1997 and had operated with Speedways each year from April to October since 1998.

Passenger demand currently is not such that there is room for both a FlyingCat 40m and the new high-capacity 52m catamaran on the route, it is felt, as *Halunder Jet* carries more passengers than *Vargøy* and *Hanse Jet II* combined. Also, due to the relatively long journey time of around 3 hours 40 minutes only one round trip a day is

being operated and consequently the catamarans would depart Hamburg and return from Helgoland more or less simultaneously in order to offer day trippers ample time on the island on the one hand and not return to the city too late in the evening on the other.

In addition to the catamaran FRS operates a conventional ship between Cuxhaven, at the mouth of the River Elbe, and Helgoland and also there are other vessels, both traditional and fast ferries, running between various points on the German North Sea coast and the Frisian Islands.

The third fast ferry company in the area, Elbe City Jet, does not operate to Helgoland but maintains a commuter and tourist link between central Hamburg and Stade and Lühe, using a 33m 322-seat catamaran, *Hansestar*, delivered by Lindstøl Skip, Norway in 1997. Prior to this a pair of smaller Lindstøl catamarans were operated. Between April 12th and October 26th this year four daily round trips will be operated. Scheduled trip times are 65 minutes for Hamburg–Stade and 50 minutes Hamburg–Lühe.



FlyingCat 52 *Halunder Jet* at the Fjellstrand yard in Norway last month [FRS photo]



[TIM TIMOLEON photo]

Never
wear blue
against a
blue
background

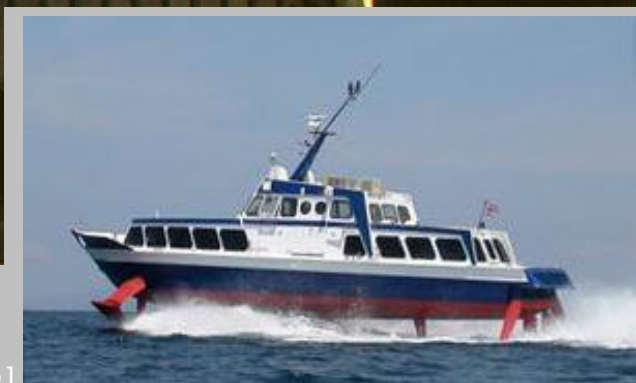
Here's the full-size counterpart to Vincenzo's admirable model of the Rodriguez PT.50 *Freccia d'Oro* described on page 6–7 in this issue.

Only, in this view it carries the rainbow design introduced by Aliscafi-SNAV in the 80s. While the stripes at the rear may not be all that out of place, the dark and muddy blue on the hull is and does not belong on a hydrofoil. Not only does this make the vessel look heavy and clumsy – which of course is diametrically opposite what the hydrofoil is all about – but why choose a dark shade of blue on something that is working in an already more or less deep blue environment? Sadly, SNAV doesn't feel this way and has continued its tradition with painting the hull of its hydrofoils (and catamarans) a dead dark blue and today has the most unfortunate paint scheme of all Italy's fast ferry operators.

Freccia d'Oro last operated in 1991; in November of that year, while in the Rodriguez yard for the winter, it was destroyed by heavy storms hitting Messina.

This is not

the end



[FREDDY STORHEIL photo]

[MIKAEL ERIKSSON photo, main]

But in fact the beginning. The pair of former British RHS 70 hydrofoils that were sold off by Red Funnel last year is given a new lease of life in Thailand. In February the first of them, *Shearwater 6*, was taken to a shipyard in neighboring Malaysia for overhaul and repainting. It has since entered service as *Flyer 2* with Phuket Flying Boats. More in the newz section on page 4-5.